

**Subject:** State of the Sanctuaries Report Available pr  
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State of Sanctuary Report 2004 Features  
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Accomplishments

NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary Program has released the 2004 State of the Sanctuary Report. Highlighted in this year's report is a tagging project that allows scientists from the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary to study the underwater behaviors of humpback whales. Other activities and accomplishments throughout the sanctuary and National Marine Sanctuary System are also featured in the 2004 report.

"Throughout the year, the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary conducts a variety of activities, from scientific monitoring to resource protection, to education and outreach," said Craig MacDonald, sanctuary superintendent. "The State of the Sanctuary Report is important because it shows how activities such as humpback whale monitoring will improve not only our ability to teach the public about these resources but also provide for sound management decisions to ensure they can be enjoyed by future generations."

Sanctuary researchers and partners tagged humpback whales with innovative non-invasive suction cup tags for a cetacean behavior study. Using the NOAA ship Nancy Foster as a base of operation, the team of 16 scientists from eight institutions recorded the pitch, roll, heading and depth of whales, as well as their sounds. By studying whale tracks and ambient noise, researchers may better understand human induced changes in animal behavior.

The report highlights other accomplishments that took place in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary including the production and March broadcast of The Science Channel's hour-long documentary about the wreck of the passenger steamship Portland. Also accomplished in 2004, was the development of ten "Action Plans" that will provide a foundation for the draft sanctuary management plan scheduled for release later this year.

The 2004 State of the Sanctuary Report also details activities throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System. Examples include: continuing efforts to designate the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Coral Ecosystem Reserve as the nation's 14th marine sanctuary; preservation of key artifacts from the famed Civil War ironclad USS Monitor; recovery of 3,500 coral colonies from harbor dredging in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary; and a volunteer program that has dramatically reduced mortality of harbor seal pups in the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

"This past year was important for national marine sanctuaries and the world's oceans," said Daniel J. Basta, director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program. "The 2004 report reflects how a wide range of activities and people came together with the common goal of understanding and conserving our ocean and Great Lakes treasures."

Copies of the 2004 State of the Sanctuary Report can be obtained by sending requests to [sanctuaries@noaa.gov](mailto:sanctuaries@noaa.gov). Electronic copies can also be downloaded at <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>, where information is available on other activities and accomplishments taking place throughout the National Marine Sanctuary System.

The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP) seeks to increase the public awareness of America's maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. Today, the sanctuary program manages 13 national marine sanctuaries and one coral reef ecosystem reserve that together encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources.

The NOAA National Ocean Service manages the NMSP and is dedicated to exploring, understanding, conserving and restoring the nation's coasts and oceans. The National Ocean Service balances environmental protection with economic prosperity in fulfilling its mission of promoting safe navigation, supporting coastal communities, sustaining coastal habitats and mitigating coastal hazards.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Ocean Service: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov>

National Marine Sanctuary Program: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary: <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov/>

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